Community Resilience Toolkit

Volunteer Role Profile

The information contained within this general role profile or job description is intended to clarify your activities as a community volunteer before, during and after an emergency or flood event. Importantly, this profile also outlines the limits of your role and responsibilities. Remember, your overall role is to support the community and not to carry out the job of the Emergency Services.

In undertaking any activities not described in this role profile you may not be covered by any insurance policy provided for you and your group.

Your role BEFORE a flood

Understand flood risk within your local area
The risk of flooding that your community faces changes over time. New buildings, roads and even farming and land use practices can affect flood risk. Watercourses, culverts and drains can be affected by debris that could restrict their flow. Keep aware of how changes within your local environment may impact on the risk of flooding.

You can play an important role by acting as the "eyes and ears" of the local authorities. Report any debris in watercourses or culverts to your group co-ordinator and/or the local flood risk authorities in accordance with procedures in your community plan.

Identify properties at risk of flooding
Some properties are at greater risk of flooding than others. Knowing which properties are more likely to flood and possible flow routes of flood water can help you to become better prepared for an emergency. To help, take a look at a flood risk map of your local area. Consider which properties have flooded in the past. Also, look for properties in low lying areas or close to watercourses.

Identify vulnerable individuals
Your strength as a community volunteer is your detailed knowledge of your local area and the people living within it. Build up an understanding of who lives in your area and especially anyone who may require priority attention during a flood such as the elderly or less mobile.

Once you have identified vulnerable individuals within your community keep this information safe and secure. Your group co-ordinator or Town or Parish Council may manage a list but you are advised to remember the information without writing it down.

Support community plan training and activities
You are encouraged to take part in any training for community volunteers. This is to provide you with information to help you to carry out your role in a safe and responsible way. The training will be updated and repeated on a regular basis.

Your community plan forms the basis of your community's response to flood risk. You should familiarise yourself with the contents of the plan and how to respond during a flood. You should always follow the guidance and advice set out in the plan as well as any training you have received

to ensure you do not place yourself or others at unnecessary risk. If procedures within your community plan contradict any activities described in this role profile highlight them to your group co-ordinator who will be able to clarify the situation.

Your community plan will be tested on a regular basis. This is to test that the plan works well and to learn from any problems or shortcomings. It is also a good way of making sure you know what to do in an emergency. You are encouraged to support these "dry runs" or drills and take part, where possible.

Your community group might meet on a regular basis to discuss issues related to flooding in the local community. You are encouraged to attend these meetings, where possible, to keep up to date with developments and issues.

Help raise flood awareness
Helping to raise flood awareness within the community is an important activity within a community plan. Households and businesses may benefit from useful information such as; how to prepare for flooding, steps to protect property and emergency contacts. You may be asked to help with the door-to-door distribution of leaflets and newsletters, for example.

Assist with the recruitment of community volunteers
As a member of the community you may be ideally placed to identify other people with the enthusiasm, skills and attitude to support the community during an emergency. If you know of anyone suitable to be a community volunteer refer them to your flood plan co-ordinator.

Do not attempt to enter or clear watercourses or culverts
Report any debris in watercourses or culverts to your group co-ordinator and/or the local flood risk authorities in accordance with your community plan. Do not place yourself at risk of injury or harm by attempting to enter or unblock watercourses or culverts yourself.

Your role DURING a flood

Prioritise your own safety at all times
Your priority at all times it to ensure your own safety and not to place yourself at unnecessary risk of injury or harm.

Follow procedures set out in your community plan
The procedures set out in your community plan are there to ensure a co-ordinated response from the community in the event of a flood. They are also there to promote your wellbeing and that of others.

Relay information to the local community
The Emergency Services, local authorities or the Environment Agency may call upon your assistance to relay information to the community. This may be to warn the public of a potential flood and particular areas to avoid or to provide information to promote health and wellbeing. This would involve door-to-door visits to engage with individual properties.

Assist with the distribution of sand bags
Many community plans provide support through the distribution of sand bags. When filling, distributing or installing sand bags, always follow the advice and guidance set out in your training over correct procedures and manual handling.

Follow guidance from the emergency services at all times
The Emergency Services and the Police in particular take the lead during a flood event. Follow their advice at all times as you may be placing yourself and others at risk of harm if you do not. Remember, you are not a member of the uniformed emergency services. If you are told to evacuate from an area follow the guidance you are given.

Provide the emergency services with local knowledge and information
Your strength as a community volunteer is your detailed knowledge of your local area and the people living within it. Relay this information to the Emergency Services during a flood. Be mindful the information may relate to individual properties or persons and should be managed responsibly at all times.

Collect information about the flood
Information you collect and record during a flood can be important to the Environment Agency and other authorities when analysing the cause and how to reduce risk in the future. Notes and especially photographs on flow routes and water levels can be very useful.

DO NOT place yourself at risk at any time
Your safety is a priority. Follow the guidance set out in your training and do not undertake activities that may place yourself at unnecessary risk.

DO NOT enter flood water at any time
Flood water poses many different risks and dangers including; trips, slips, contamination, drowning and injury from submerged hazards. Do not enter flood waters.

DO NOT attempt to operate or repair flood defence structures or equipment
The unauthorised use of flood defence equipment could increase the risk of flooding or hide problems that should be addressed by the relevant authority. Similarly, do not use any equipment you have not been trained or authorised to use.

Your role AFTER a flood

Submit information you collected about the flood
Information you collect and record during a flood can be important to the Environment Agency and other authorities when analysing the cause of the flooding and how to reduce risk in the future. Submit your information to your flood plan co-ordinator.

Help to relay information to the local community
You may be able to support your community by relaying useful information after a flood. Newsletters and door-to-door visits can help keep people informed after an emergency. Information may relate to personal safety, hygiene, insurance claims or the risk of further flooding.

Support your community
It can take many months for individuals, households and businesses to recover from flooding and return to normal daily life. This recovery process can be stressful and impact upon people in different ways. As a member of the community you may be able to provide support to those affected. Refer members of your community to a suitable authority or expert for further guidance and advice.

	Role Profile – Community Volunteer	
	DO	DO NOT
BEFORE	Understand flood risk within your local area Identify properties at risk of flooding Identify vulnerable individuals Support community plan training and activities Help raise flood awareness Assist with the recruitment of community volunteers	Do not attempt to enter or clear watercourses or culverts
DURING	Prioritise your own safety at all times Follow procedures set out in your community plan Relay information to the local community Assist with the distribution of sand bags Follow guidance from the emergency services at all times Provide the emergency services with local knowledge and information Collect information about the flood	DO NOT place yourself at risk at any time DO NOT enter flood water at any time DO NOT attempt to operate or repair flood defence structures or equipment
AFTER	Submit information you collected about the flood Help to relay information to the local community Support your community	